



Weekend Boho Sandals

Written By: Kristina Pinto



PARTS:

- [Stretcher bars \(2\)](#)
11".
- [Congress cloth \(1\)](#)
9"x11".
- [Floss \(1\)](#)
Card of Mandarin floss M822 brown bamboo by RG.
- [Silk \(1\)](#)
Skein of silken ribbons blue 006 silk by Thread Gatherer.
- [Spool \(1\)](#)
Spool of Kreinik 027 orange metallic 027 #12 tapestry braid 10 meters.
- [Bias tape \(1\)](#)
Brown basting/bias tape, at least 1.5" in width for backing.
- [Tapestry needles \(1\)](#)
size 22 or 24.
- [Sewing needle \(1\)](#)
- [Thread \(1\)](#)
Brown thread sewing machine.

SUMMARY

These simple yet eye-catching sandals represent the marriage of uptown chic with downtown style. Called “weekend” sandals, they can be stitched one weekend, dropped at the cobbler on Monday, and worn the following weekend to the farmer’s market or on a dinner date. Stitched in bamboo, silk, and metallic, the shoes are comfortable, classy, and versatile.

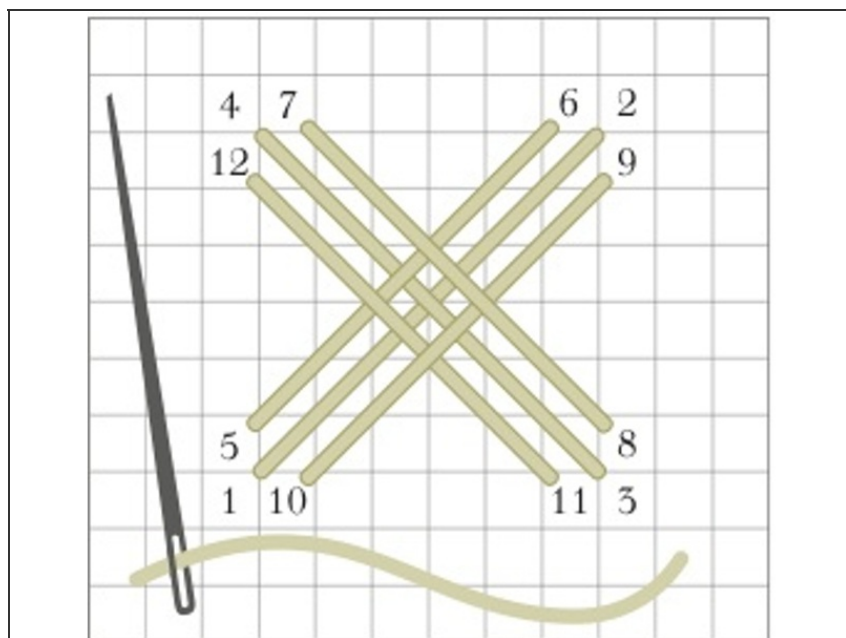
Once you’ve stitched the straps you can try making your own sandals or take them to a shoemaker. Most needlepoint shops can also connect you with someone who finishes needlepoint into shoes. Cobblers tend to cost less than upscale needlepoint boutiques, and collaborating with artisans is fun.

Step 1 — Determine the strap length, and frame the cloth.



- Measure the arch of your foot (the width of your foot about 2" down from your baby toe) to determine the length of each strap. Add about 1.5" onto this length so that there will be plenty of excess for your cobbler to attach the strap securely to the footbed of the shoe.
- Then, measure the length required for a strap across your big toe, adding another inch onto the length. It might help to use a piece of string to gauge the strap lengths, measuring each string after you've determined and cut the right length. Remember to add on the extra 1.5" for the arch straps and the extra 1" for the toe straps — you want your sandals to fit after you've taken the time to stitch them!
- Frame up your congress cloth on the stretcher bars, using thumbtacks to hold the canvas in place. No need to draw the straps on the cloth first — just keep stitching until you reach the desired length. But plan out your placement of all 4 straps on the canvas, so you'll be sure to have space to stitch all of them. You will work left to right for all straps.

Step 2 — Calculate the stitches.





- The straps for these sandals use a 4-color Norwich stitch that's laid over 16 canvas threads to create a single line of squares for each strap. If the length of your measurements does not correspond exactly to a series of complete squares for each strap, do not attempt to stitch partial squares of compensation stitches — it won't work.
- Instead, use tent stitches down each end of the strap to compensate. It's likely these tent stitches will wind up buried under the footbed once the sandals are made. Be sure to calculate so there is the same number of vertical rows of tent stitches along each end.
- When you're done, you'll have something resembling this illustration of an arch strap; note the squares created with the Norwich stitch.

Step 3 — Stitch squares on long strap.

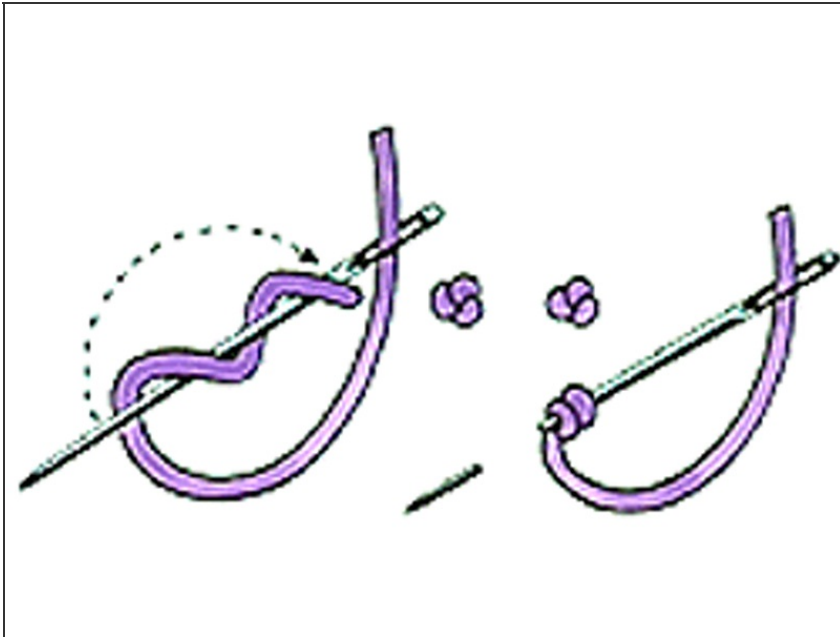


- For each square on the long straps, begin with the middle by creating a large cross stitch, then go around the square with diagonal stitches once, using 3-ply of the Splendor silk. Follow the chart to the right, which shows a 4-color Norwich stitch laid over 16 canvas threads. While only the first 2 stitches are displayed, it's easier to grasp the placement and order of the stitches without all of the lines depicted to represent them — just follow the numbers.
- All of the stitches that come up through the canvas are odd numbers, and all of the down stitches are even. For instance, start by bringing your needle up through the canvas at 1, then down at 2, up again at 3, down at 4, and so on. The colors of the numbers correspond to the colors of the fibers in the displayed sandals.
- After you sink your needle at 12, change color from the green to the brown thread. Then before bringing your needle up through hole 29, change color to the orange metallic. You only do a few stitches in this fiber before changing color to the blue silk to come up through hole 37. Finally, change your color (one last time) back to brown. Slide the last stitch (59-60) under stitch 57-58 to complete the woven look.

- By laying the squares over 16 canvas threads, you'll leave an empty hole in the center of each side of each square, but these aren't discernible if you use 3-ply of the fibers to stitch, which will amply cover the canvas. Naturally, you should feel free to substitute colors you choose or to rearrange the order of the colors I used.
- Each Norwich square shares a vertical row of canvas holes from the square before it. In other words, once you've completed the first square, you will bring your needle back up through hole 3 to start the next square. This goes for the toe straps as well. Don't forget to change your fiber color back to green, since you'll end each square with brown (for the arch straps). 
- Make sure to bring your needle up through the fabric on the odd numbers, and down on the even numbers. 
- The toe straps also use a Norwich stitch, but only over 8 canvas threads. Follow the chart to the right. This time, colors are ordered by green, brown, and blue. Change colors as indicated in the chart. Once you've stitched all squares for each strap, place a French knot, with the orange braid between

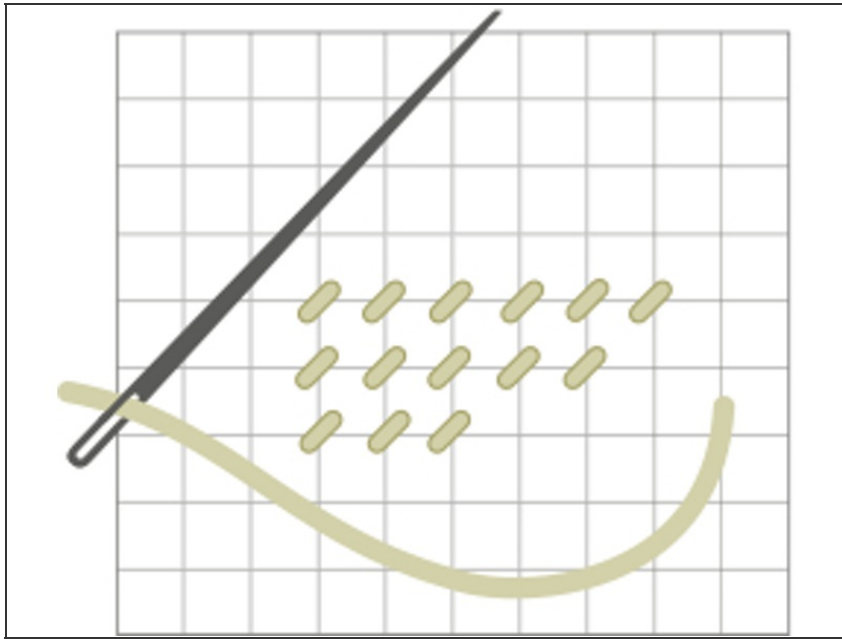
each square, in the empty hole. Do not place one on the ends of the straps. Doing so would aggravate your second toe and your cobbler.

Step 4 — Make a French knot.



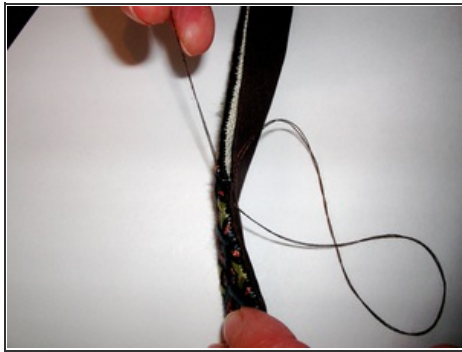
- To create a French knot, bring your needle up through the empty hole between 2 Norwich squares. Hold the thread with your thumb and wrap your orange braid around the needle 3 times. Then, holding the thread that's wrapped around the needle so it doesn't slide off, gently insert your needle back down through the same hole, taking care to keep holding the braid wrapped around the needle until the cord is pulled taut through the canvas hole. This will create a knot on top of the canvas.
- As with the arch straps, if you find the length of your toe strap does not correspond to an even number of Norwich squares, use an equal number of rows of compensating tent stitches on either end of the strap to achieve the desired length for the strap.

Step 5 — Add a border row of tent stitches.



- Once you have the 4 bands stitched, stitch one more row of tent stitches along the top and bottom lengths of each strap with the bamboo thread to conceal the bare canvas. Refer to the tent stitch illustration at left for how to do this easy stitch.

Step 6 — Attach backing of basting tape.



- You need to attach a cloth backing to the straps so that the raw canvas edge won't aggravate your foot, and to make them look professional — handmade, not homemade, as my mom says. Basting (or bias) tape, which is available in any sewing store, works very well and is inexpensive. You might also use an ultrasuede, which is softer. Match the color of your backing fabric to the color of your extra row of tent stitches; I chose brown. Also, be sure to use a quality thread that is doubled over in your needle for sewing on the backing — you don't want your thread to snap. I recommend Gutermann.
- Cut out each strap from the congress cloth, leaving no more than 1/4" of raw canvas around the perimeter. To sew the backing on the strap, you will use a technique called blind finishing, or invisible stitch, also used for hemming an item of clothing. This process will probably take longer than the needlepoint phase, and it's somewhat tedious. A needlepoint shop will do it for you for a fee, but you can do it yourself, too. You will be sewing the backing along both long edges of each strap. You can use a sewing machine for one of the edges on each strap, but the second edge will require hand-sewing.
- After you cut out your straps, cut out the proper length and width of bias tape. The length is determined by the length of your particular straps, of course. The width of the backing should be 2.5cm wide for the toe straps and 3cm wide for the arch straps. After cutting out the 4 strips, iron each piece of bias tape flat. Then fold in each tape 6mm along its length and iron that flap down. At this point you only need to do this once per strap (not along both edges).
- Hand-sewing the edges: if you choose not to machine stitch the straps' edges to the backing and opt to do it by hand, line up the folded edge of your bias tape with the row of tent stitches along one edge of a strap. The flap on the bias tape should lie against the raw canvas edge of your needlepoint, and its crease should align with the edge of your Norwich squares.
- Bring your needle with the double-thickness of brown sewing thread up at the corner of the crease and make a small stitch along the crease, no more than 4mm per stitch, sinking the needle back into the crease of the bias tape. Then come back up, this time in the hole shared by a tent stitch and a Norwich square. Make another small, 4mm stitch along that edge, sinking back into a hole shared by a tent stitch and a Norwich square. Your next stitch will be placed in the crease of the bias tape again. Continue this way along the length of the strap, and repeat for all straps. This process can be long but it's worth it to have a finished strap with a clean edge.
- Once you've finished blind stitching (so called because the stitches are hidden) one strap edge, fold in another 6mm flap on the remaining edge of the tape, ironing it down flat to

make a crease. Stitch along that edge in the same fashion as you did for the first edge of the strap, aligning the tent stitch edge with the crease of the bias tape. Make small stitches down the length of the strap, alternating with small stitches down the crease of the bias tape. Large stitches, you will notice, make the fabric bunch and look shoddy.

- Repeat this process of invisible stitches along the remaining edge of all of the straps. For further instruction and illustration of blind stitching, see *The Needlepoint Book* by Jo Ippolito Christensen.

Step 7 — Go from straps to sandals.



- If you're handy and resourceful, you can add soles and put the sandals together yourself.
- There are several tutorials and resources available online, everything from making [Roman sandals](#) to making [soles from recycled tires](#). A great resource is *Make Your Own Shoes* by Mary Wales Loomis.
- I also recommend collaborating with artisans and increasing the longevity of your creation by having a cobbler or a needlepoint shop assemble the sandals.

This project first appeared in [CRAFT Volume 02](#), pages 92-99.

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